

House Republicans yesterday laid out an agenda aimed at strengthening their support among suburban voters.

Though the agenda targets basic issues, such as crime, education and economics, it is tailored for today's growing suburbs.

"This is good stuff," said House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, Illinois Republican, adding that he will press for passage of the half-dozen bills included in the agenda. "It's everyday stuff."

One bill would link state and national databases to ensure that interstate pedophiles aren't hired as teacher or coaches. Another is aimed at protecting children from "online predators" prowling social Web sites such as MySpace.com.

The so-called "Suburban Agenda" also would target suburban drug gangs, help families establish savings accounts for their children and aim to protect "green spaces" in suburban communities.

"American families are focused on keeping their kids safe, securing a strong financial future, preserving the natural beauty of their community and ensuring health care coverage," Rep. Mark Steven Kirk, the Illinois Republican who has spearheaded the suburban agenda.

"It represents a grass-roots, common-sense set of solutions for families in suburban communities."

The proposals are safe pursuits in any district, but polling suggests that they resonate particularly well in suburban areas. And while Republicans do comfortably in suburban districts, there is growing concern among party strategists that support may be slipping.

"A lot of people in the suburbs where I live and many of us live, I kind of believe, some days look up and wonder, 'Do they get it?'" House Majority Leader John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican, said yesterday. The suburban agenda is "a list of issues that we can do that are relevant to the people who live in our neighborhoods."

Today, Republicans represent suburban districts by an overwhelming 138-86 margin, says to Mr. Kirk. But those voters also tend to be swing voters "overwhelmingly concerned with quality-of-life issues."

Of the 435 House races this fall, only 35 are widely considered to be in play. Of those, 28 are in suburban districts.